tained forms in which that simplest of all geometrical figures, the *circle*, was principally conspicuous: and although, in the latter part of this period, the circle does not obtain the same prominent place, in the centre of the window-head, and as the principal feature of the design, that is generally allotted to it in the earlier examples; yet the important part that it bears in the construction of the design of even the whole of these later examples, fully justifies the application of the term, already pretty generally in use, to this class of windows, and entitles us to call this period after that figure, and, *par excellence*, the GEOMETRICAL PERIOD. (See fig. 3.)

At the close of this period a feature began to make its way into the subordinate parts of the tracery, which had already shown itself for some time previously in the mouldings, and which eventually exercised a most important influence on the architecture of the next half century.

This feature is the curve which mathematicians call the *curve of contra-flexure*, and which is known amongst architecturalists as the *Ogee*.

The flowing nature of this curve imparted to the tracery a grace, and an ease which the rigid outline of the circle denied to it; and affords us a strong point of contrast whereby to distinguish the architecture of the two periods. The sinuosity of form which characterizes the tracery, pervades also the mouldings, the carved work, and all the details of this period, and enables us to designate it appropriately as the CURVILINEAR PERIOD. (See fig. 4.)

In the later part of this period, a horizontal bar, or *transom*, as it is called, was occasionally used in the lower part of the window. Whether this bar was introduced for the purpose of strengthening the mullions, or for the sake of proportion, it speedily grew into frequent use. At the same time also vertical lines presented themselves occasionally in the tracery: a new principle, in fact, had made its appearance, which rapidly overran not only the windows, but the doorways, the arcades, and every part of the building. The straight line, when once introduced, quickly superseded the curved line: square panels covered the walls: angularity of form pervaded even the mouldings and minor details, and to the round finish, the square edge was preferred.

This, the last of the four periods of Gothic architecture which extended over a term of nearly two centuries, we propose accordingly to call the RECTILINEAR PERIOD. (See fig. 5.)

The history of our national architecture will thus be divided into Seven Periods, the order and duration of which are as follows:—

	A.D.	A.D.	YEARS.
ROMANESQUE.			
I. Saxon Period ...	from —— to	1066, prevailed	—
II. Norman Period ...	„ 1066 „	1145, „	79
III. Transitional Period	„ 1145 „	1190, „	45
GOTHIC.			
IV. Lancet Period ...	„ 1190 „	1248, „	58
V. Geometrical Period	„ 1248 „	1318, „	70
VI. Curvilinear Period	„ 1318 „	1360, „	42
VII. Rectilinear Period	„ 1360 „	1560, „	200

It is only just to those who have previously investigated the subject to say, that these terms are not original. In an article in the *British Critic*, some time ago, they were proposed to be applied, but with this distinction: the term *Curvilinear* was proposed to be applied to the tracery of all periods in which a *curve of any kind* is found; and the term *Rectilinear* was proposed to be substituted for the *Perpendicular* of Mr. Rickman.

Returning to his paper at the Institute, Mr. Sharpe continued,—The *Norman Period* is characterised by its extreme massiveness, the bulky proportions of every part, and its cubical capitals: there are frequently circular columns, and the round arch is universal. Superficially ornamented details are found, whether string courses with plain billet or zig-zag mouldings, or arch mouldings considerably enriched; chevrons, or zig-zags, the nail head, and animals' heads, occurring in rich but barbarous profusion around the archivolt. The bases are either without mouldings at all, or they are very few and very large. There is a triforium and a clerestory, consisting generally of three arches, of which the centre is the largest. The windows are plain and broad, and invariably circular headed. On the outside there are corbel tables, often carried on blocks, rudely sculptured. The walls have flat, shallow pilasters, rather than buttresses. The mouldings of the windows, which are heavy and rude, are carried on thick circular shafts, having also cubical capitals.

In the *Transitional Period*, the union of the circular and the pointed arch is the leading characteristic. There is a lighter proportion in the piers and mouldings, with extreme severity throughout the whole. The doorways are of the same breadth as before, but more elongated. Corbel tables support the parapet. The buttress is still flat, broad, and shallow, but has more projection than in the Norman period. The base course, and, in fact, the parts generally have more projection and lighter proportions. As to the union of circular and pointed arches, I may offer a remark upon the way in which it was generally effected, and in what parts each of them generally appeared. For more than a quarter of a century, the pointed form was confined to the arches of construction, which constituted the main frame-work of the building, whilst the circular form was confined to arches of decoration, such as doorways, windows, &c. It is true there are several examples where that rule is violated, but the exceptions themselves justify us in laying down this rule as a fixed law. Towards the latter end of this period, we find circular and pointed arches used indiscriminately, as in the example before us.

In the *Lancet Period*, the windows are invariably of the lancet form. The pier is cut up into a great number of parts, each of which is lighter in proportion to its length. Stone vaulting appears, which was by no means common in the Transition period, and of which there is no example in England (with perhaps one exception) in the Norman. Here also we have the union of triple arches under one, a new feature which gave rise to so great a revolution, first seen in the space above the subordinate arches which are pierced with openings of different forms. We have banded shafts, trefoiled arcades, and all that pointed feature which exhibits itself, not only in the windows, but in the buttresses and in the general aspect of the building, both externally and internally. There is a base course of considerable projection, full of deep hollows and bold mouldings. String courses abound in every part of the building.

We have next the *Geometrical Period*. Buildings of this period have hitherto been classed as transitional buildings; as anomalous structures, exhibiting part of one style and part of another; whereas, whilst it embraces a greater number of buildings than any other class, and those by far the most beautiful and important of the whole, we find it to possess marked and distinctive features of its own. The principle of these is the prevalence of the circle, which occurs in the windows everywhere, and in all the mouldings and other details, as well as in the general outlines of the building. The carving of this period is marked by great richness and elegance, and may be said to be the most beautiful we can boast of. The shafts now increase somewhat in proportion,—a greater degree of solidity again making its appearance, but there is also great richness of detail. The crocket is introduced for the first time; panels are brought in, and the whole surface is covered with beautiful and delicately treated ornaments.

We next come to the *Curvilinear Period*, and here that sinuosity of form which I have mentioned shows itself everywhere, in the windows particularly. The buttresses are much more slender: they are ornamented with canopies, and carry the fully developed crocket, which, instead of being a stiff bell-like leaf as before, becomes a mass of elegant foliage. The buttresses are graduated with regular sets-off, the base mouldings diminishing in size; and, above all, we have the elegant, flowing, intricate tracery, which is the most remarkable characteristic of the period. The triforium disappears in this period.

Lastly, in the *Rectilinear Period* you will see the predominance of straight lines, not only in the windows, vertically and horizontally, but in the arcades on the walls, and also in that upper portion of the building which corresponds with the roof of the side aisle, which is no longer a triforium, but a prolongation of the window itself. We have here also the four-centred, or Tudor arch, as it has been called, together with the same thinness and flatness, and shallowness of detail, which began to appear in the previous period. I may say here, generally speaking, that I look upon the Geometrical period as that in which our national architecture arrived at its climax, whether in the architecture generally, in the mouldings, or the carved details, every portion of which was carried out in the most beautiful and delicate manner. The art of carving in stone gradually improved, in fact, until this period, about A.D. 1260, and then declined again as it approached the sixteenth century.

There are very few of the illustrated works on the subject of Church Architecture to which I have referred that do not contain numerous examples of the mouldings of the buildings described in them, yet I do not know a single instance in which the mouldings of the arch are exhibited in any other manner than as a continuous series of rounds and hollows, without any reference to the mode in which the arch is constructed. We have, in fact, in all these examples, one unbroken, undissected profile exhibited, as if the whole series were carved out of one solid block, a proceeding common enough indeed in modern practice, but as unattainable by mediæval builders, as it was foreign to the character of their buildings, in which stones of such large dimensions were never used.

It is therefore worth inquiring, how the arch of the middle ages was constructed. The arch, as handed down by the Romans to our forefathers, exhibited one broad uniform soffit, extending throughout the whole thickness of the wall, panelled and relieved on its surface and sides with superficial mouldings, but unbroken and undivided in the principle of its construction. It appears to be extremely probable, that this simple form of construction prevailed throughout the first thousand years of the Christian era; and so far as we are able to form an opinion from the few remains which are left in buildings belonging to the Saxon period, it appears almost certain, that all the arches of that period were of the same form.

In the Norman period, however, a new principle was introduced, which was rapidly adopted and soon became universal, and was never subsequently abandoned. According to this plan, the arch was divided into two or more layers or orders, which formed, in fact, a series of concentric receding arches, of which the innermost or lowest carried on its back the one above it, which was in turn subordinate to the next, and so on. This new principle then was that of *subordination*, one which was not indeed confined to the member of which we are treating, but which rapidly overspread the whole of the building, and the influence of which became eventually perceptible in its minutest detail.

We now approach the subject from a new point of view: a mediæval arch was composed of a series of consecutive and concentric courses or orders, and each order carried a series of mouldings on its outer edge. We have now a key to the classification and arrangement of these mouldings, and instead of viewing or representing them any longer as one continuous, undivided series, we must look upon them as the ornamental portions of a series of distinct subordinate arches, grouped and combined in a highly artistic manner so as to produce an appearance, in which due subordination of parts, so uniformly characteristic of the designs of these periods, is made consistent with the general unity of effect, essential to the importance of so principal a member of an ecclesiastical building.

Having thus examined the construction, we will now proceed to consider the decoration of a mediæval arch. Now, to one who understands the language, the history of our national architecture is as clearly written in their mouldings, as it is in the general outline and

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